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ASBURY PARK

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SAND SCULPTURES

N.J. SAND CASTLE CONTEST IS IN BELMAR

SAND SHAPERS

NEW JERSEY SAND CASTLE CONTEST IS WEDNESDAY IN BELMAR

By MARISSA KAMENO • Staff Writer

No rules, no restrictions, no costs — just a fun day of building sand castles on July 14 at the 24th annual New Jersey Sand Castle Contest in Belmar.

Builders will have four hours to complete their sand masterpieces. Get to the 18th Avenue beach early with your shovels, water and pails to snatch the best locations on the beach, right near the water.

After the 8 a.m. registration, builders have until noon to create a castle or sculpture in one of six groups. The groups are: ages 7 and younger, ages 8-11, ages 12-15, ages 16 and older, day camps and families.

Frank Sementa, owner of the contest's lead sponsor, D'Jais Bar and Grill, became a part of the event more than 15 years ago. He said Mayor Ken Pringle didn't want to see the event go after the sponsor dropped it, so he stepped in.

"It's a multigenerational event," he said. "Really good, clean fun."

In each age group, there will be a first-, second- and third-place winner, as well as a Best on the Beach award. Participants are judged on a one-to-five scale in four categories: creativity, resourcefulness, originality and accessories. The judging will take place between noon and 1 p.m. The awards ceremony is at 1:30 p.m.

Sculptures can range from traditional castles to sea creatures and surfers. Sementa said his favorite was a sculpture of a woman snorkeling, which was very realistic looking, despite being one of the smaller creations. Another memorable one was a sculpture of his restaurant.

Sculpting is not quite as easy as it looks. Sementa, who said he has taken the time to learn some of the skills, noted that while sculpting is "infectious, it would be hard to plan out if you didn't know how to do it." To help out

those who wish to participate but do not possess the knowledge, there will be a free sand castle-building clinic July 10. Between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Chuck Fed will be teaching kids of all ages about sand sculpting. The tools will be provided, and it will be at 18th Avenue beach. Fed is a sand-sculpting master, according to Springboard PR, the agency in charge of the contest.

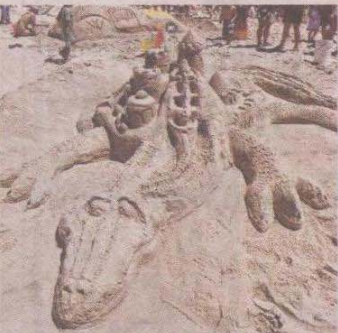
Last year's first-, second- and third-place winners from each age group, as well as the Best on the Beach winner, have been invited to attend the clinic and participate. The 19 winners also will have a VIP section near the boardwalk during this year's contest.

About 10,000 builders and viewers are expected to attend the contest.

While the participants are busy at work on their projects, viewers can participate in games and contests. Sponsors have donated gift certificates and prizes to be given away throughout the day, as well as prizes for the sand sculpting winners.

The rain date is July 15.

The contest is on the beach at Ocean and 18th avenues, across from D'Jais Beachcomber Grill.



TOP LEFT: An entry from last year's contest. **LEFT:** A sculptor creates a moat around his castle. **RIGHT:** Richard Isgard of Freehold works on his sculpture last year. (FILE PHOTOS)



CoverStory

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